

**NATIONAL [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] COALITION
AGAINST [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] CENSORSHIP**

Strategic Plan 2021-2023



NCAC History

The National Coalition Against Censorship was formed by a group of activists affiliated with the ACLU in response to the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Miller v. California*, which narrowed First Amendment protections for sexual expression and opened the door to obscenity prosecutions.

Originally called the “National Ad Hoc Committee Against Censorship” and led by Leanne Katz, the coalition counted 23 participating organizations by 1975, united in their commitment to defend “freedom of thought, inquiry and expression” and a belief in educating their own members and the general public as the first line of defense against censorship. Early participating organizations included the ACLU, American Library Association, Directors Guild, National Endowment for the Arts, National Council of Teachers of English and Writers’ Guild, as well as several national religious groups. The original governance included plenary meetings of representatives from participating organizations, who voted on adopting the current name in April, 1976.

At the time of its founding, NCAC acted as a hub for a diverse group of organizations that had an interest in defending free speech—whether sexual, political, religious or otherwise. NCAC made it possible for them to speak together in defense of First Amendment freedoms. By 1985, just over a decade after its founding, NCAC had 41 participating organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups. In 2020, the coalition has grown to include 56 groups and can legitimately claim to speak for millions of Americans who recognize the importance of free speech. (Although a coalition, NCAC functions independently, and it does not necessarily speak for its participating organizations on specific issues.)

From the beginning, NCAC has defended free expression as essential to all our freedoms, especially the freedom to read, learn and create. NCAC has long benefited from strong relationships with book publishers because of its defense of the hundreds of books that are challenged in schools and libraries every year. Its relationships with children’s publishers are essential to its success.

NCAC currently has two primary programs: Arts Advocacy, which was founded in 2000, and Youth Free Expression, which includes the Kids’ Right to Read Project, which started in 2003.

Vision and Mission

NCAC Vision

We envision an American society that understands, values, defends, and vigorously exercises free expression in a just, egalitarian, diverse, and inclusive democracy.

NCAC Mission

Every generation of Americans faces new and significant challenges to free expression. For almost 50 years, NCAC has acted as a first responder to protect this freedom, which is both a fundamental human right and a keystone of democracy in the ever-changing American nation. We promote freedom of thought and inquiry and oppose censorship. When controversy occurs, we encourage and facilitate dialogue between divergent voices and perspectives, including those that have historically been silenced.

Achieving our Mission

We provide direct intervention for people and groups facing censorship in their communities.

We serve

- Students, teachers, librarians, parents and others opposing censorship in schools and libraries
- Artists, curators and museum directors resisting art censorship
- Writers and publishers
- Activists and protestors
- Dramatists, filmmakers, creators of all forms of art and cultural production
- Our coalition partners

Our Rule of Four (Core Beliefs)

1. Free expression is fundamental to both individuals and society. The right to free expression is a basic human right and essential to human fulfillment.
2. The right to free expression, including the right to access ideas, information, art and science, makes it possible for original thought and creativity to thrive.
3. We are a non-partisan organization. We defend the right to free expression no matter how controversial or objectionable to many the expression may be.
4. While our work enforces First Amendment principles, we defend freedom of expression when menaced by unwarranted suppression from any source, including local, state and federal officials, private individuals and corporations. Free expression issues are particularly complex and evolving in the increasingly important social media sphere, in which some individuals and entities wield great power. We advocate measures that will foster free expression in this crucial arena.

Advocate

For 45 years our alliance of more than 50 national non-profit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups has engaged in direct advocacy and education to support First Amendment principles. NCAC is unique in that we are national in scope, but often local in our approach. Our interventions include writing letters to government agencies, cultural institutions, universities and schools, and issuing statements, sometimes jointly, to the press.

Activate

We work with community members to resolve censorship controversies without the need for litigation, but we have also led or signed onto amicus briefs in important First amendment cases. We also offer support behind the scenes, guiding public officials in developing policies that preserve free expression rights and foster open discourse and referring at-risk targets of censorship to lawyers who provide their services pro bono.

Educate

NCAC creates and distributes free resources, tailored for specific audiences, aimed at supporting our constituents in combating censorship in their communities, as well as educating them about their rights. This includes students, artists, curators, parents, teachers and school administrators. Over the years,

NCAC has created hundreds of resources of all types. We currently maintain a library of 120 different resources at ncac.org.

Solutions

NCAC works with all involved parties in censorship disputes to avoid litigation. This often involves helping multiple parties develop best practices and better policies and guidelines for any future disputes.

NCAC's Key Advocacy Areas

Art

NCAC's connection to art, artists and cultural institutions is one of its greatest strengths; in part because in recent years, an increasing number of art controversies have involved private institutions, rather than government censorship. Art continues to be a core priority for the organization: recently, the Arts Advocacy Project intervened directly in 32 cases involving or threatening censorship, and advised artists and arts professionals in more than 50 cases across the country.

Youth: YFEN/YFEP

NCAC is committed to defending students' rights to freely learn, access information and express opinions. Our Youth Free Expression Program currently focuses most of its work on K-12 students.

In 2003, former NCAC board member Marjorie Heins collaborated with Stephanie Elizondo-Griest to design the Youth Free Expression Network. YFEN engaged young people (age 14+) by inviting them to author editorials and participate in a Youth Speakers' Bureau, among other important educational efforts.

In 2005, NCAC launched the Youth Free Expression Film Contest to provide a platform for student creative perspectives on free expression questions. This was one of the first times NCAC explicitly focused on empowering students, rather than merely defending their need for an open education. Over 15 years, the contest has received 1,137 submissions, including 278 submissions in its peak year.

Additionally, in 2007 NCAC launched the Kids' Right to Read Project (KRRP). KRRP was created to focus attention on book censorship, the frequency of which is not widely appreciated by the American public. Over the past 11 years, the Kids' Right to Read Project has written letters to 473 schools to defend challenged or removed books and defended the First Amendment rights of over 200,000 students.

Free speech and Technology

NCAC participates in the discussion of the impact of social media and other emerging technology on free speech. Our educational and activist work involves young people, artists and social media companies.

Protest/Dissent

In 2020, the right to protest and dissent has been especially prevalent. Political speech is the most important type of speech protected by the First Amendment. NCAC has defended expressions of dissent and protest since its founding, primarily through its programs focused on youth and art, as well as joining the initiatives of other organizations.

Government secrecy and privacy

Since its founding, NCAC has opposed government misuse of citizen's personal information and questioned the ethics and legality of intelligence gathering methods. Government transparency and citizen privacy are key concerns in fighting censorship.

Free Expression Network

NCAC administers the Free Expression Network, which was founded in the early 1990 to bring together non-profit groups that work on free speech issues. Nearly 70 organizations, higher education institutions, law firms and individuals communicate through the FEN listserv. FEN members meet several times annually to discuss new cases and plan strategy.

Popular Culture: film, music, video games

Throughout the past 45 years, focus has, at various times, shifted between a variety of non-book media deemed "problematic." NCAC has played a major role in responding to attempts to censor violent media of all kinds and opposed restrictive ratings systems for music, movies and videogames.

2021-2023 Strategic Plan for Growth and Sustainability

There has always been censorship in the United States. Abolitionists were attacked and even killed for speaking out against slavery. Advocates for sexual equality were imprisoned for obscenity. Union meetings were banned. In the last century, there have been two Red Scares, and southern states used censorship to try to snuff out the civil rights movement. Today, there are many more legal protections for free speech, but the danger of censorship will remain strong as long as there are deep differences of opinion among Americans.

NCAC is uniquely positioned among all free speech organizations to carry out its mission. We remain a broadly-based and non-partisan organization that defends speech without regard to its content. Our long history of success as a thought leader and an effective advocate, together with our programmatic excellence, make NCAC qualified to address new censorship issues as they arise.

NCAC's Art Advocacy Program (AAP) is the only national project dedicated to working directly with individual artists, arts administrators and curators involved in censorship disputes. AAP protects the rights of artists and art audiences through advocacy and education by defending public access to artists' work and supporting artists' ability to freely express views that might be controversial and enable cultural institutions to display challenging work.

Our Youth Free Expression Program (YFEP) is the leading national advocate for the free speech rights of young people, especially secondary school students, protecting their access to literature, art and information and giving them the knowledge, tools and opportunities to assert and defend their right to speak. YFEP promotes policies that emphasize informing, educating, and guiding young people so that they can defend their rights and participate fully in current affairs.

NCAC created a new strategic plan using an adaptive process in 2019. Drawing on our deep experience and a large and growing list of donors, NCAC is now well positioned to implement a three-year plan that addresses the long-term program and financial goals that will ensure the future of the organization.

Critical areas of concern:

1. Work to develop an understanding of what the First Amendment is meant to protect and the importance of free speech principles to a democracy. Targeted constituencies: young people, the artistic community and free speech advocates;
2. Oppose efforts to prevent or limit access to art and books;
3. Oppose the censorious actions of social media companies and privately enforced, arbitrary rules for regulating content. Recognizing that the new media environment poses old problems in new contexts, we are committed to innovative solutions that preserve enduring values.

Threats to free speech and free expression are emerging almost daily in forms both old and new. NCAC provides thoughtful leadership and direct service programs to defend and expand free expression for Americans. NCAC remains committed now more than ever to working directly with all individuals who are battling censorship.

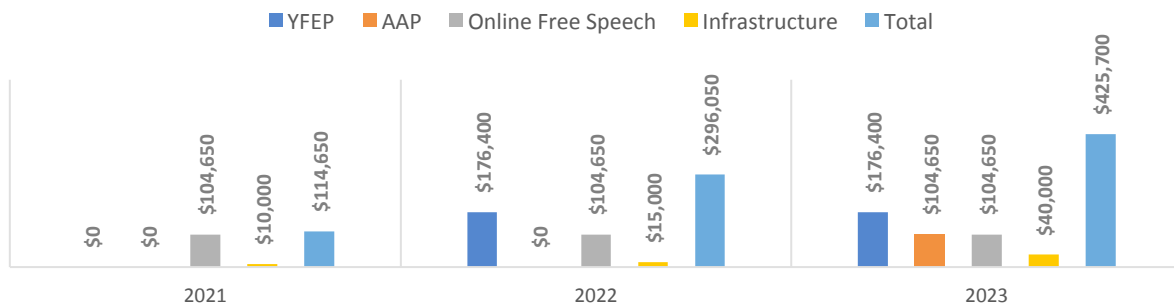
With appropriate funding in the period 2021 – 2023, NCAC will:

1. Expand the case-related advocacy and education work of our Youth Free Expression Program from **60-80 cases annually to 300 cases over three years**, impacting over **300,000** secondary school students, educators, school administrators and librarians. NCAC will also launch of a new student engagement initiative around youth and free speech that will mobilize and impact an additional **10,000** students;
2. Expand the casework of our Arts Advocacy Program from **25 cases annually to 120 cases over three years**, positively impacting over **2,000** artists, curators and other art professionals. We will also expand our education and advisory services to reach an additional **500 key institutional leaders**. The impact of this work will also be felt among art audiences that number in the tens of thousands;
3. Expand NCAC staff to create a dedicated program focusing on online free speech issues affecting our core constituencies: artists, arts organizations, youth and educators. We estimate the program will be able to reach at least **2,000** individuals in its first year and increase that reach exponentially as it becomes established;
4. Expand our free expression thought leadership by increasing our communications output (op-eds, statements, webinars, etc.). We expect to reach **1,000,000** individuals through these increased efforts;
5. Support board and governance capability;
6. Create a broader NCAC alliance by engaging more social and racial justice organizations in the discussion of freedom of speech and expression through debates, guest bloggers and panel discussions;
7. Assess direct marketing program and determine how to improve acquiring new donors and improve donor development and;
8. Develop a formal major donor program that contributes to the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Snapshot: Financial Goals

In order to achieve our programmatic goals and to strengthen our financial position, NCAC will need to raise **\$4,136,400** in 2021-2023, increasing revenue by **34%**. Eighty-five percent of the **\$836,400** in new funding will be invested in additional program staff. The rest will be invested in programmatic and organizational infrastructure.

Annual Cumulative Increases over 2020: Program Area



Total Added Budget Over 3 Years: \$836,400

Total Budgets by Year 2021-2023



Total Revenue Goal for 2021-2023: \$4,136,400

I. Focus Area: Board of Directors and Leadership

GOAL: Improve effectiveness of Board to meet organizational goals by strengthening governance and fundraising through diversification and expansion

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Support implementation of strategic plan	Annual review at in-person meeting	Board of Directors, NCAC Executive Director
Board members develop resources and relationships for NCAC	Establish “give or get policy”	Board of Directors
Board takes a direct role in nominating and selecting new members with ‘give or get’ ability and specific skill sets that meet NCAC needs	Governance Committee to meet twice a year to consider new candidates	Governance Committee
Board increases to total membership	Add six new board members	Governance Committee
Increase board diversity	Development of board matrix to determine where NCAC can improve its leadership diversity	Governance Committee

II. Focus Area: Development and Communications

GOAL 1: Raise \$4,136,400 from 2021-2023 to increase NCAC programmatic impact to over 350,000 young people, artists and affected groups and individuals

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
NCAC will raise \$2,895,480 (70% of goal) in actual cash and pledges through major donors and prospects by the end of 2022	Conduct 6-8 major gift donor prospect meetings per quarter Support and investment by NCAC Board of Directors Create 10 major donor profiles per quarter Utilize tactics (top donor matrix) to ensure efficiency and efficacy Circulation of top prospects among leadership 1 Major Gifts Committee meeting	Executive Director, Board of Directors, Development Director, Programs Director, Development and Communications Coordinator

	<p>per quarter</p> <p>2 LOI submission to foundation prospects per quarter</p> <p>1-2 regional events per year that include NCAC program benefactors</p>	
<p>NCAC will raise an additional \$1,240,920 (30% of goal) through annual giving and major donors by the end of 2023</p>	<p>Increase under \$1,000 gift donations by 15%</p> <p>Introduce ‘final push’ with Kickoff Campaign</p> <p>Full integration of remaining dollar goal with all media channels and direct mail</p> <p>Increased push with local and national social media fundraising efforts</p> <p>Re-solicitation of prior major gift supporters</p> <p>Consider implementing full scope direct marketing campaign</p>	<p>Development Director, Direct Mail Consultant, Communications Director, Executive Director, Board of Directors</p>

GOAL 2: Increase audience distribution by 20% and engagement by 10% through improved visibility, retention and infrastructure

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Define visibility goals and metrics	<p>Develop standard metrics that measure impact of stories, posts on various media channels</p> <p>Improve analyzation across channels</p>	Communications Director
Grow distribution channels	<p>Seek 4 non-news related placements in publications annually</p> <p>Post 10 statements, letters of summary (local vs. national) quarterly</p> <p>Develop 3 advocacy alerts quarterly</p>	Communications Director, Programs Director

Capitalize on NCAC high profile campaigns	Across all channels, distribute 2 posts, 1 press release and 10 social media posts per campaign	Communications Director, Programs Director
Improve messaging frequency and impact to retain and build market	Send 6 emails per quarter Develop stronger segmentation of audience and channels Send 2 surveys to supporters annually for data collection Improve integration with direct mail Strengthen SEO Develop “welcome” series for new subscribers Implement automation	Communications Director, Development Director
Diversify earned media	Create NCAC expertise media kit Distribute kit to 75 media outlets Increase social media references to NCAC articles by 20%	Communications Director, Programs Director

GOAL 3: Improve annual campaign donation gift numbers by 15%

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Increase retention rate by 15% and upgrade rate by 10%	Targeted messaging with greater outreach with \$250-\$999 donors Advocacy and case intervention alerts Make contact with 5 mid-level donors per quarter Implementation of communication metrics	Development Director, Development and Communications Coordinator, Communications Director

III. Focus Area: Programs

GOAL: Measure impact for beneficiaries through assessment, data collection and anecdotal evidence

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Programs assessment	<p>Consultant to assess strengths/weaknesses of programs</p> <p>Standardized metric development to define impact, particularly in YFEP</p>	Consultant
Development of tools to capture quantitative and qualitative metrics	<p>Create 15 surveys for participants in our work to capture qualitative and quantitative data</p> <p>Capture 45 personal stories</p>	NCAC Programs Director, YFEP Programs Director, AAP Programs Director

Youth Free Expression

GOAL 1: Scale education work by reaching 5,000 teachers, librarians and elementary and secondary school officials about their First Amendment obligation to students

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Identify and fill needs and gaps in resources for institutions	<p>Improve/update 5 existing resources</p> <p>Create 3 new major national resources for student use</p>	YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, NCAC Communications Director
Implementation of best practices, model policies at institutions	<p>Disseminate best practices, guidelines for model policies and educator handbooks to 1,000 institutions, teachers and librarians</p> <p>Speak to 250 constituents (teachers, librarians, school administrators, students)</p>	YFEP Program Director, Administrative Assistant
Grow collaborations	Work with 10 organizations that have national bandwidth and large target constituencies	YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director
Improve case intervention in censorship disputes and legislation	<p>Reactive case intervention through:</p> <p>At least 100 press releases</p>	YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director

	<p>At least 20 statements</p> <p>At least 150 of 'behind the scenes' with teachers and librarians</p> <p>At least 100 letters to school boards</p>	
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GOAL 2: Provide at least 10,000 secondary age people a platform to discuss free speech issues

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Raise NCAC's profile among students and young people as a first amendment/free expression resource	<p>NCAC will respond and/or reach out to 1,000 students and young people</p> <p>Reach out to 200 school newspapers to include NCAC contact information (syndicated columns)</p>	<p>YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director</p>
NCAC empower, educate and amplify students voices (13-19) on first amendment and expressive rights	<p>Create a 'student leadership council' to cultivate and solicit blogs, topics, webinars, etc. on youth free expression</p> <p>Conduct 90 interviews with young people to implement a monthly feature on free speech/free expression stories</p> <p>Outreach to students/young people to submit 30 blog posts through school districts in which we work</p>	<p>YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director</p>
Implement limited term initiatives that allows NCAC to respond to evolving threats and challenges to free speech and young people	<p>Conduct 3 non-traditional, creative vehicles, e.g., actions, galleries (physical), activism, working in collaborations with others that give attention to youth and free speech</p>	<p>YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director, Administrative Assistant</p>

Goal 3: Educate and create meaningful dialogue for 300,000 secondary school students on free speech rights and the expression of those rights

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Empower students to defend their own free speech rights	Develop 2 new resources for education of students and young people	YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director
Dissemination of resources	Contact 30 schools, 30 youth programs, 20 libraries, youth press, and other relevant outlets so as to disseminate current and future resources to youth.	YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, YFEP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications, Director

ARTS ADVOCACY

GOAL 1: Scale education work to reach over 700 art professionals and curators, thus impacting a much larger number of artists and tens of thousands of audience members.

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Update NCAC resources for art professionals	Add 10 new cases to artist rights website New edition of 'smart tactics' 2023 New edition of manual for 'art freedom' 2023 New and updated edition of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression Handbook 2023	AAP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director
Expand NCAC art and free speech activities helping education art professionals negotiate the display of sensitive and potentially controversial subject matter and to increasing NCAC's visibility in the community	Create or participate in 15 conferences, workshops and/or webinars/seminars Disseminate resources to artists, arts organizations, as well as leading figures in the media and arts	AAP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director

GOAL 2: Increase support to 120 controversial works and their creators

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Provide critical needs support to artists and art professionals by defending challenged artworks and intervening in censorship disputes, both at public and private institutions	Conduct 60 letter writing campaigns advocating for artists in censorship incidents Do active media interventions in at least 50 art related cases Author 30 briefs and statements	AAP Program Director NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director
Mobilize collaborators to work on cases and long-term issues to address systemic issues	Work with 15 collaborators in the free speech and arts fields	AAP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director
Implementation of limited term program initiatives that allow NCAC to respond to evolving threats and challenges to free speech and art professionals	Create one high profile non-traditional, creative vehicle, e.g., action, gallery, campaign etc. working in collaboration with artists and curators.	AAP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director, Communications Director

FREE SPEECH AND TECHNOLOGY

GOAL 1: Educate, guide and support 10,000 artists and young people in their free speech rights and responsibilities online

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Expand and improve NCAC art and free speech educational activities online	Create 2 new resources - one for arts professionals and one for young people - that educate about rights and responsibilities online. Distribute through social media to 10,000 young people and arts professionals	YFEP Program Director, AAP Program Director, YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, Social Media Director, NCAC Programs Director
Strengthen credibility among impacted primary constituencies as an online leader	Respond to 30 inquiries for support Reach out to 60 of affected constituencies to offer support Assist 100 artists and young people in the online appeals process	YFEP Program Director, AAP Program Director, YFEP Youth Outreach Coordinator, NCAC Programs Director, Social Media Director

GOAL 2: Increase focus and impact on technology related issues

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Improve corporate social media free speech and free expression policies	Monitor developments in social media companies' policies Proactive outreach to 3 social media companies for direct intervention in policy making	Social Media Director, AAP Program Director, NCAC Programs Director

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

GOAL: NCAC will strengthen and expand its role as thought leaders by reaching 1,000,000 people with important opinions and statements

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
As a free speech leader, NCAC will continue to define new positions on all topics that advocate for free speech	Submit 30 opinion editorials Sign onto 5-10 appellate and supreme court amicus briefs Publish 250 blog posts Update Censorpedia with 200 new art specific cases Issue 50 statements of position on high-profile free speech issues Lead or participate in 30 workshops, panels, presentations or discussions on all topics of free speech	NCAC Programs Director, NCAC Executive Director, Communications Director, AAP Program Director, YFEP Program Director

IV. Focus Area: NCAC Coalition

GOAL 1: Revitalize, diversity and expand coalition

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Identify and invite newer, and/or diverse participating organizations that augment and/or strengthen NCAC's mission	Drop inactive POs Identify new POs in program areas	Executive Director Program Director
Re-engage with members and establish liaisons for ongoing support	Identify PO contacts Increase dues income Request support for NCAC statements 3 times per year	Executive Director

Strengthen FEN and its impact	Identify new members Expand online access to meetings Increase use of listserv	Executive Director, Communications Director
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V. Focus Area: Operations

GOAL: Ensure that NCAC is tracking important metrics to support growth and funding of programs

Objectives	Outcome Indicators (metrics)	Responsibilities
Numerical and anecdotal data is collected and maintained in a central database	Implementation of a central database for data to track program metrics	Development Coordinator
Support development and strengthening of program work to achieve strategic plan goals	Hire Arts Advocacy Director Hire Youth Free Expression Program Director Hire Social Media Director Hire Youth Outreach Coordinator Hire Administrative Assistant Hire consultant for program assessment	Executive Director NCAC Programs Director